

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe

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By Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey
168th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Air National Guard 168th Wing dedicates KC-135 flagship in honor of Fairbanks community

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — The Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Wing honors Fairbanks, Alaska, the city it calls home, with the dedication of the wing's flagship aircraft, Dec. 18.

"We have strong ties with our local communities and Fairbanks is where many of our Airmen live, work and raise their children," said Col. Richard Adams, commander of the 168th Wing. "We want to thank our community for their support of our hometown Airmen by proudly flying our KC-135 flagship."

A flagship aircraft is a dedicated aircraft with the wing commander and the dedicated crew chiefs' names on it and is maintained to the highest standards. It is the jet that represents the Wing. The dedicated crew chiefs for the flagship are Tech. Sgt. Robert Albaugh and Staff Sgt. Elliot St. Laurent.

"The KC-135 flagship is an important symbol to our Air Guard," said Adams. "I appreciate the support we receive from our community and want to pay tribute to Interior Alaska, showcasing our hometown Airmen and our neighbors as we fly and serve worldwide."

The aircraft's tail will also have a polar bear standing strong on the wing's tail flash, representing Alaska's arctic region and spirit. The geometric design of the polar bear highlights the wing's culture of innovation.

"Alaskans serve together, and the Fairbanks flagship—along with all of the other interior communities represented on our aircraft—represents our arctic community spirit," said Adams.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes selected full-resolution. <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6463177/alaska-air-national-guard-168th-wing-dedicates-kc-135-flagship-honor-fairbanks-community>

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Tech. Sgt. Matthew Barker of the 168th Maintenance Group adds Fairbanks, Alaska to the wing's flagship KC-135 Stratotanker and installs the new Polar Bear design on the tail flash dedicated to Fairbanks, Alaska. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey)



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The 168th Air Refueling Wing exemplifies the spirit of Total Force teamwork, and is the only Arctic region refueling unit for all of PACAF. The mission of the 168th Wing is to "train Alaska Guardsmen to provide a constant Air Force Capability of Global Reach and Vigilance, by means of the KC-135 aircraft and early warning space systems, and stand ready to protect American resources and Alaskan communities." The 168th Wing transfers more fuel than any other Air National Guard tanker wing, due to the fact that nearly all receivers are active duty aircraft, many of which are on operational missions. The 168th Wing is YOUR Hometown Air Force and Guardians of the Last Frontier.